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## ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE TRAINED NURSE \*

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(Continued from page 468.)

TURNING more directly to the work of nursing, we go back to the year 1821, when Theodore Fliedner, a Lutheran minister only twenty-one years of age, was given charge of a parish at Kaiserwerth, a small town on the Rhine just below Düsseldorf, where the people were mainly of the Roman Catholic faith and found their livelihood in a velvet industry.

This young pastor was provided with a yearly salary of one hundred and thirty dollars, hardly "passing rich on forty pounds a year," and even that was soon nearly lost through the failure of a velvet manufacturer who had given employment to most of his parishioners.

Our hero was the son of a Lutheran clergyman, and had ploddingly passed through his ecclesiastical course with no promise of greatness, hardly of common success.

He carried, however, into all his work, from the beginning of his school duties to the end of his life, sincerity of purpose and tenacity in method. He had doubtless heard of the work of John Howard and Mrs. Fry, and his sense of the injustice that closed the gates leading to honest employment, and possibly worldly redemption in the case of discharged women convicts, led him to consider earnestly and carefully

\* Address delivered at the opening of the Nurses' Home of the Samaritan Hospital, Troy, New York.

what could be done for them, though he was then devising methods to continue the work of his parish after the loss of the main source of support.

To provide an endowment for his church he went among his Evangelical friends in Germany, Holland, and England, where he not only had a measurable success in securing funds for his parish, but he had the opportunity to observe the need of a change of method in the administration of prisons and hospitals, and he doubtless discussed the problems with those who, like him, were moving for such a change.

Though the condition of the inmates of the prisons and hospitals, for we may properly class them together from many stand-points, was such as to appeal to all those who knew the facts and whose hearts impelled blood rich enough to develop sympathy, the question of what to do about it did not admit a ready answer.

Conservatism is at once the most useful and the most injurious of social notions, and to break the bonds of custom, strong through habit and vested interests, requires often the strength of an intellectual and physical Hercules.

How should this simple Lutheran pastor, with only the resources of what might be termed a parish of paupers, hope to accomplish the work that was untouched in Germany and still needed so much in England in spite of the labors of Howard and Mrs. Fry?

In his desire for opportunity to investigate, he even requested to be committed to prison, and there was not enough of humor in the German mind to gratify him as a joke. He did finally secure the privilege—and, mark, it was a privilege—of holding religious services fortnightly in the prison at Düsseldorf. He associated himself with others in agitation and efforts to devise ways and means towards reform, and in 1826 was organized the first Prison Reform Society in Germany. It was early felt by Fliedner that if great good was to be achieved the work could not stop at improvement in prison care, but the hand of encouragement must be extended to the convict as she passed out of the prison gate, not in a sentimental, but in a practical way.

We should also understand that our young pastor had taken a wife, and the cares incident to a growing family must have pressed upon him, but in his garden was a summer-house, which with his own hands he converted into a shelter from cold and storm, and in 1833 he virtually said to a poor Magdalen as she passed from the prison, "Follow me, and I will find a home for you." The work having been begun in this way, the needs of the sick poor of the vicinity came pressing on him, so that he began to plan for their care, and the scheme grew into a small hospital installed in an abandoned velvet factory. No mawkish sentimen-

talities came into Fliedner's mind or plans, and we may even believe that he showed at times a measure of German bluntness, and once at least of rudeness. His prison waifs could not at first be given tasks implying confidence,—they must win their way through humble service to such position of trust and work as their efforts and abilities could earn,—but he found employment for them in domestic affairs in connection with his hospital, and though doubtless he must have seen failures in the refractory material composing the convict class, he had many triumphs in this fight for godliness and righteousness.

To his practical mind one of the crying needs in administration was to supply intelligent and devoted service in the nursing department of the hospital.

Again attention is called to the fact that skilled nursing did not then exist. Not only was there no opportunity for nurses to secure a training, but only persons of inferior mental or social standing could usually be found to care for the sick, aside from the limited field occupied by the Sisters of Charity, and even with them there was no systematic training. However wealthy or refined the patient might be, however great might be the need for gentle, intelligent, and skilled care, it could not be had. This defect our German organizer saw, but only in so far as it applied to institutional care, for he even probably failed to grasp how his work would grow and deepen into the result that now allows in so many households the comfort and help of trained nursing.

In considering the problems connected with this need, Fliedner concluded that a combination of ecclesiastical motive with practical training would secure the best result, hence his idea of reviving the early established but long disused order of deaconesses.

To this work he invited Lutheran women, creating for them an order, establishing for them a home, and providing for them a system of training. One of the fundamental principles in his scheme was obedience, that the nurse-sister should go and come and do as was ordered by her superior, and that without question or comment so long as it was in the line of duty. The organization vows of the deaconesses pledged them to the care of the poor, the sick, and the young. Their vows were not made in perpetuity, but it is probable that to the Protestant mind this was rather an element of strength and growth.

In 1836 his small hospital and deaconesses' home were opened, to which was soon added an infant school, then a training-school for teachers in infant classes. In 1842 an orphanage for orphan girls of the middle class and in 1847 an asylum for lunatic women were opened.

The home for deaconesses that he founded at Kaiserwerth soon ceased to be alone, for Fliedner's activities extended beyond the con-

finer of his little parish, and he gave personal attention and assistance in the establishment and management elsewhere of institutions like his own.

In 1849 he resigned his pastoral work, the duties of which had been conscientiously discharged up to that time, and for two years travelled extensively in Europe, Asia, and America to establish what was termed "Mother Houses," i.e., homes for the deaconesses, from which their actual work could be done, and from which daughter houses might bud and fruit. His last work is even poetical in its denomination, being the establishment at Kaiserwerth of the "House of Evening Rest" for those deaconesses who had passed the period of active duty.

In 1864 death terminated the labors of this remarkable man, but there then existed over one hundred establishments or stations with four hundred and thirty deaconesses, from Jerusalem in the East to the prairie cities of our own country.

It is probable that he took little interest in the theological problems that stirred Germany during his active lifetime, and the fact that he was a Lutheran was an incident of birth and nationality. Such a character is not the product of any ecclesiastical organization, but one who has his gifts and the opportunity will do good work in any land and under any religion. His was eminently the religion of deeds, and his life exemplifies the truth of the adage, "*Laborare est orare.*"

(To be continued.)

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## EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE TENEMENT- HOUSE COMMISSION, NEW YORK, 1901

By L. L. DOCK

(By permission)

Of all the great social problems of modern times incident to the growth of cities none is claiming public attention in a greater degree than that of the housing of the working people. Mere housing, however,—that is, merely providing shelter,—does not solve this problem. It only aggravates it by herding men and women together under conditions which inevitably tend to produce disease and crime. . . .

In most cities the housing problem is the problem of the small house rather than of the large tenement. . . . In New York, however, as in no other city in the land, it is the problem of the tenement-house,—the five-, six-, or even seven-story building, usually on a lot twenty-five feet in width and with as many as four families on each floor. . . .